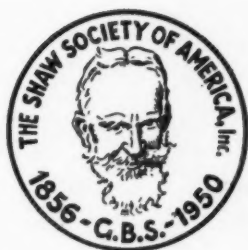


THE SHAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

(Founded 26 July 1950)



Bulletin Number One

February 1951

Founders

President

Archibald Henderson
721 East Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Active Vice Presidents

Cedric Hardwicke
Clark Kinnaird
Leonard Lyons
Maxwell Steinhardt
Gene Tunney

Honorary Vice Presidents

Katharine Cornell
Albert Einstein
Samuel Goldwyn
Gertrude Lawrence
Thomas Mann

Secretary

William D. Chase
Post Office Box 871
Flint 1, Michigan

Treasurer

David Marshall Holtzmann
36 West 44th Street
New York 18, New York

Richard S. Aldrich

S. N. Behrman

Nathan Broder

Helen M. Chase

Barrett H. Clark

Marion Davies

George V. Denny, Jr.

Edward H. Dodd, Jr.

Walter Prichard Eaton

George Freedley

Curtis P. Freshel

Rosamond Gilder

Felix Grendon

William Randolph Hearst

Theresa Helburn

Fanny E. Holtzmann

William Irvine

Lucile Kelling

Francis Kettaneh

Hellmuth R. Klein

Lawrence Langner

Mabel Dunham Locke

Marvin Lowenthal

Percy MacKaye

Armina Marshall

W. Somerset Maugham

Guthrie McClintic

Ross Parmenter

Gabriel Pascal

Lee Pritzker

Lennox Robinson

Charles Bolles Rogers

Ralph Sanborn

C. Sass

Samuel Selden

Upton Sinclair

Mary L. Tunney

Bernard Shaw's Message

The list of illustrious names on the foundation committee of the American Shaw Society is so staggering that I am at a loss how to comment on it or exult in it without a gross self-complacency foreign to my very diffident nature.

Now that I am so old that to me the Bernard Shaw of fifty years ago is as dead as the infant of 90 years ago, I can contemplate any estimate of him quite disinterestedly except for some wonder at the things he could do and I can no more do now than I can skate or sing or walk without a stick.

And I cannot help asking why not (for instance) an Einstein Society or a Society named after other famous persons much cleverer than I ever was? The utmost I can claim for myself in my best days is that I was one of the hundred best playwrights in the world, hardly a supreme distinction.

I was one of the inventors of Fabian Socialism, now established as the policy of the U.S.S.R. I helped to set the religion of Creative Evolution with its feet on the ground because I saw that no established religion in the world is wholly credible, and that without religion men are political timeservers and cowards.

So why not a Stalin-Nehru Society and a Butler-Bergson Society, as these pioneers are or were better men of action than I? For, I repeat, I was not commonly clever enough to have a good opinion of myself until I decayed into the ancient dodderer I now am.

Then what can I say to the attachment of my name to associations of great artists and thinkers among whom I can claim no pre-eminence? I can only hope that in other hands Shavianism will be carried so far that future generations will say "We agree with your doctrine; but who the devil was Bernard Shaw?"

A note on Shaw's last birthday message: Shaw's message, printed above, was typed on buff, sulphite paper, cut and pasted like newspaper copy, and revised in his own meticulous and inimitable calligraphy. I had written to him in June, announcing the forthcoming birth of the Shaw Society of America, hoping he would comment on it but knowing too, that in the past he had not been inclined either to praise or publicly recognize the various Societies bearing his name. A few days later a letter from Dr. F. E. Loewenstein bore this note: "You can expect important message from GBS," and within a week, on July 1, 1950, to be exact, the above statement arrived. It is, I believe, the last summing-up of his career before his death.

-W. D. Chase

George Bernard Shaw

By Thomas Mann

Let the future determine George Bernard Shaw's weight in the scales to the last ounce. This much is certain: His sobriety, like his diet of greens, was necessary to his particular brand of clearheadedness, unconstraint, and liberating ebullience, and nothing could be more erroneous than to mistake his coolness for an actual incapacity for love. He may have laughed at everyone and everything, but he was anything but a Mephistophelean nihilist, "thrusting the devil's chill fist in the face of the soothing powers of creation". It is his Captain Shotover in *Heartbreak House* whom he gives these words to say: "Old men are dangerous; it doesn't matter to them what is going to happen in the world." Shaw did care what was to become of the world, right down to the age of ninety-four. The clergyman who intoned the prayers at his deathbed was quite right when he said: "This man was surely no atheist." He was no atheist, for he revered the vital force that is conducting so noble an experiment with man on earth, and was sincerely concerned lest God's experiment become a failure. Convinced that the esthetic element, creative joy, is the most effective instrument of enlightened teaching, he tirelessly wielded the shining sword of his word and wit against the most appalling power threatening the triumph of the experiment - stupidity. He did his best in redressing the fateful imbalance between truth and reality, in lifting mankind to a higher rung of social maturity. He often pointed a scornful finger at human frailty, but his jests were never at the expense of humanity. He was mankind's friend, and it is in this role that he will live in the hearts and memories of men.

Esme Percy's Last Visit With Shaw

During the week of November 13 through November 17, 1950, the Columbia Broadcasting System presented a series of five radio broadcasts entitled "You and the World of GBS." Guests on the program were Princess Alexandra Kropotkin, Estelle Winwood, Esme Percy, Rosamond Gilder, and Guthrie McClintic. Dwight Cooke was host on this series of programs produced by Ralph Backlund. By kind permission of the Columbia Broadcasting System we print below a portion of Mr. Percy's discussion of his last visit with Shaw.

COOKE: ... There's another thing that I don't believe anybody else in the United States today has, Mr. Percy. I believe that out of anyone in the country today you certainly are the last man who saw Mr. Shaw alive.

PERCY: Yes. It was on Monday afternoon, the 16th of October. I went out to Ayot St. Lawrence, and it was a very great favor that I was allowed to see him. I spent a whole hour with him. He was in bed, and he looked much less frail than on my previous visit. That may have been the gown he was wearing. I think he was wearing a nightgown. It didn't look like pajamas. But he had cream-colored blankets - crocheted blankets, curious blankets - right up to his chest. And his beard was thicker and his hair was longer, and he had rather vivid color. His eyes ... recently when I'd been seeing him, he always wore glasses. Hardly ever took his glasses off. But he hadn't got his glasses on. And the blue of those eyes was as piercing and clear as ever. He smiled quite a lot. Wonderful smile. And he laughed quite a lot. And we talked and gossiped about everything, about the reception of his last playlets, *Far-fetched Fables*, which I did at the Little Theatre, and to which the press wasn't very kind. You see, the awful, the *terrible*, thing that Shaw did in their eyes was to have written a play that he never intended to write. They said, "If he can't write a major work like *Don Juan*, or *Methuselah*, or *Saint Joan*, one of these big masterpieces, why write at all?"

COOKE: In other words, if he can't do the kind of thing we're familiar with and know how to criticize, he shouldn't be writing?

PERCY: GBS said himself last year, "If I stop writing, I stop living. I must write." ... Well, to revert to this last ... the last time I went to see him. As I was saying, we talked about everything, and he looked like a figure of Blake. He was remarkable. And after about an hour's talk, he said, "I think its time that you should go." And I went. But he had said, amongst other things, "Well, why do you want to see me?" "Well," I said, "GBS, I've grown up with you. For the best part of forty years my life has been dedicated more or less to you, to your work." And he said, "Well, get along with you now, anyhow." And I left. As I was about to drive away, the nurse came out and called me back. And Mr. Shaw took hold of my hand, and he said, "You must be a very poor man to afford such luxuries as buying my *edition de luxe* of *Buoyant Billions*." Then I looked at him, and he took my hand and he pressed it against his chest. And then I felt how thin it was - like porcelain. And that was the only time in my life, except once, when I'd really seen GBS give way to an ordinary emotion. I knew then I wasn't going to see him again.

Creative Evolution

By Archibald Henderson

As one of the avowed objects of The Shaw Society of America is "the study and interpretation of Shaw's works," it seems obligatory to publish below a letter sent to *The New York Times*. In the issue of November 24, 1950, appeared a dispatch from London, November 23, 1950, in which Clause Four of Mr. Shaw's will was quoted as follows:

"My religious convictions and scientific views cannot at present be more specifically defined than as those of a believer in creative revolution. . ."

In the issue of November 25, 1950, appeared an editorial, "GBS and Religion," in which Clause Four of the will is quoted from the issue of November 24, with the statement: "The doctrine of 'creative revolution' that he subscribes to in his will can be traced through many of his works where he searches for a religious purpose in life, and often finds it. . ."

On November 27, 1950, I sent to the editor of *The New York Times*, with request to publish, the letter printed below. Under the caption, "Creative Evolution," the error to which I called attention was corrected in the issue of November 29, 1950; and my letter was returned to me on December 1, 1950. In the interest of clarifying the misunderstandings of Shaw's religious and theological views, I am submitting the text of my letter to *The New York Times*, which did not appear in that newspaper since it reached them on the day in which the correction by the editor appeared. Follows the text of the letter:

To the Editor:

In *The New York Times*, thrice in the issues of November 24 and 25, is found the singular statement that the late Bernard Shaw was an adherent of the doctrine of "creative revolution." This expression is meaningless; and the quotation from Shaw's will has doubtless been garbled in cable transmission. Speaking from an intimate acquaintance with Shaw and his writings for upwards of half a century, I unhesitatingly affirm, although I have not before me a certified copy of his will, that the phrase should be "creative evolution."

In 1901, in the Preface to *Man and Superman* and in the *Dream in Hell* which is customarily omitted in production, Shaw first set forth in a formal manner the tenets of his religious faith. His conception of the Life Force finds its roots in Schopenhauer's "World as Will and Representation," Nietzsche's *Wille*

zur Macht, Bergson's *l'Evolution creatrice*, and Lamarck's doctrine of Functional Adaptation. Popular Darwinism he rejected for its crude materialism and spiritual emptiness. He endorsed Samuel Butler's characterization of natural selection in his "Luck or Cunning?" as a "purely automatic conception of the universe as of something that will work if a penny be dropped into the box."

In 1921 Shaw set forth a further extension of his philosophical view in the huge work - five plays in one - *Back to Methuselah*, which he sub-entitled "A Metabiological Pentateuch." Just as Lamarck virtually maintained that living organisms changed because they wanted to, so Shaw believes that there is a purpose in the universe, a will driving toward self-contemplation: to grasp the purpose of life. This purpose, or Life Force, according to Shaw, has blundered along through the centuries, the aeons, making many useless experiments and scattering its forces in many fruitless undertakings. Disease and sin are no less unhappy experiments of the Life Force than are the now extinct megatherium, ichthyosaurus, and diplodocus, scrapped because of their essential brainlessness.

Shaw cherishes the idea of creative evolution, as he once told me, because it gives him something to look forward to, something to hope for. It gives him a deep and satisfying faith in something better and greater, beyond the life-forms already developed. Man he thinks of as only a stage in the scale of evolution; and entertains grave doubts as to man's survival. Shaw is essentially a wishful thinker: he is "on the side of the angels." The Life Force, as he once expressed this mystic hope to me, will continue its efforts to realize itself. After the passage of uncountable aeons it will produce something more complicated than Man: the Superman, the Angel, the Archangel, and last of all the omnipotent and omniscient God.

This is a mere skeletal abstract of Shaw's theology; but it is, I believe from many conversations with him on the subject, essentially correct. Once asked if he believed in a personal God, Shaw replied: "The Life Force is God." Shaw was indubitably a deeply religious man; but he rejected the ascetic ideal of Christianity and the doctrine of the Atonement. Not long before his death he publicly declared that he had bequeathed to the world the only credible religion. It is just possible that Bernard Shaw is his only convert.

Archibald Henderson, President
The Shaw Society of America

Chapel Hill, N. C.
November 27, 1950

Upton Sinclair's Introduction To Bernard Shaw

There has been produced in New York a play called *Candida*, by a new British dramatist. I had no money to see plays, but I borrowed the book, and it was like meeting Shelley face to face, a rapturous experience. Now came *Man and Superman*, - I remember reading it in the summertime, lying in a hammock by my woodland cabin, and kicking my heels in the air with delight over the picture of the British aristocracy in heaven - not understanding the music, and being bored to death, but staying because they considered that their social position required it.

-From Upton Sinclair's autobiography, "American Outpost", by kind permission of the author. It should be noted too that Mr. Sinclair's ten-volume series of "Lanny Budd" books begins and ends with scenes in which GBS appears.

Events: Shavian and Otherwise

Mr. Shaw's last completed work, *Bernard Shaw's Rhyming Picture Guide to Ayot St. Lawrence*, is published in Luton, England, by the Leagrave Press. GBS took all the photographs himself and wrote the rhymes shortly before his last illness.

* * * *

Shortly before his death, Bernard Shaw sent to Dodd, Mead & Company corrected proofs of a new book which is scheduled for publication on February 13th. The volume will contain his play *Buoyant Billions*, *A Comedy of No Manners*, with a long argumentative preface; *Farfetched Fables*, a series of six playlets with prefaces; and *Shakes Versus Shav, A Puppet Play*, also with a preface. This last Shaw play, written in late 1949, he speaks of as "in all actuarial probability my last play and the climax of my eminence, such as it is." The book will be typographically uniform with the three-volume set which contains twenty Selected Plays.

* * * *

Cyril Clemens, President of the International Mark Twain Society, Webster Groves, Missouri writes that a Memorial Number of *The Mark Twain Quarterly* for GBS will be issued soon. Mr. Shaw was an honorary member of that organization.

* * * *

Dr. Archibald Henderson, president of The Shaw Society of America, Inc., and the original authorized biographer of GBS, is at work on a new, full length biography, *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century*, which is to be published by Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.

30 Years with GBS, by Blanche Patch, will be published in this country first in serial form (21 newspaper installments) and, early in March, in book form by Dodd, Mead & Company. The English edition, published on January 15th by Gollancz, went through three printings in the first four days on sale.

* * * *

The censor ordered the deletion of one line - "His name was Hitler, poor chap" - before the first public performance of Bernard Shaw's last play, *Far-Fetched Fables*, at the People's Theatre, Newcastle.

-Weekly Overseas Mail, London, January 13, 1951.

* * * *

Shaw's Will: The New York Times reported on December 10, 1950, that "Last week an unknown person paid the shilling the law requires, and petitioned the court to suspend probate on the will. The petition rested on the ground that the suspected legacy to further a phonetic alphabet would 'gravely affect the majesty of the English language and would have serious repercussions on English literature.'"

Certificate of Incorporation
of
THE SHAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.
(Pursuant to the Membership Corporations Law)

WE, the undersigned, do hereby certify and set forth that we propose to form a membership corporation, pursuant to and in conformity with the acts of the Legislature of the State of New York.

FIRST: The corporate name of the said corporation shall be THE SHAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

SECOND: The purposes for which the said corporation is to be formed are to study and interpret George Bernard Shaw's writings, work, and personality; to make him more widely understood and appreciated; and to provide a meeting ground for those who admire and respect the man.

THIRD: The territory in which the operations of said corporation are to be conducted principally is the United States of America, its territories and dependencies.

FOURTH: The principal office of said corporation shall be located in the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York, County of New York and State of New York.

FIFTH: The number of directors of said corporation shall not be less than five nor more than twenty-five.

SIXTH: The names and post office addresses of the directors of said corporation until the first annual meeting of the corporation are as follows:

NAMES	RESIDENCE ADDRESSES
Archibald Henderson	- 721 E. Franklin St., Chapel Hill, North Carolina
William D. Chase	- 1225 Mason Street, Flint, Michigan
David Marshall Holtzmann	- 251 Central Park West, New York, New York
Gertrude Lawrence	- 17 West 54th St., New York, N. Y.
Maxwell Steinhardt	- 33 East 70th St., New York 21, N. Y.
Clark Kinnaird	- 76 Mine St., Flemington, New Jersey
Gene Tunney	- Stamford, Connecticut
Cedric Hardwicke	- c/o Famous Artists, 610 Fifth Ave. New York, N. Y.
Leonard Lyons	- 1 West 81st Street, N.Y., N.Y.

SEVENTH: That all of the subscribers to the certificate are of full age; that at least two thirds of them are citizens of the United States; that at least one of them is a resident of the State of New York, and that of the persons named as directors, at least one is a citizen of the United States.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, we have made and signed this certificate in duplicate and have hereunto set our hands and affixed our respective seals this 31st day of October, one thousand nine hundred and fifty.

Archibald Henderson	(L.S.)
William D. Chase	(L.S.)
Fanny E. Holtzmann	(L.S.)
Leonard Lyons	(L.S.)
Richard Aldrich	(L.S.)
Cedric Hardwicke	(L.S.)
Maxwell Steinhardt	(L.S.)
Clark Kinnaird	(L.S.)
Gertrude Lawrence	(L.S.)

STATE OF NEW YORK }
COUNTY OF NEW YORK } SS.:

On this 31st day of October, in the year one thousand nine hundred and fifty, personally appeared before me Archibald Henderson, William D. Chase, Fanny E. Holtzmann, Leonard Lyons, Richard Aldrich, Cedric Hardwicke, Maxwell Steinhardt, Clark Kinnaird, Gertrude Lawrence to me severally known and known to me to be the individuals named in and who executed the foregoing certificate, and they thereupon severally acknowledged before me that they did execute the same.

I, Felix C. Benvenga, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, of the First Judicial District, do hereby approve the foregoing certificate of The Shaw Society of America, Inc.

Dated, New York, October 31, 1950.

(Signed) Felix C. Benvenga
Justice of the Supreme Court
of the State of New York

How to Become a Member

Any person agreeing with the objects of The Shaw Society of America, Inc., and wishing to join the Society may apply for membership. Address your application to the Secretary (William D. Chase, Post Office Box 871, Flint 1, Michigan). The annual fee is \$5.00. Checks should be made payable to The Shaw Society of America, Inc.

Mr. Bernard Shaw's Appeal for a British Alphabet

My appeal to existing Government Departments, Colleges, Trusts, Societies, and other relevant agencies to undertake the production of a British alphabet has failed. The need has not been questioned; but the replies are to the same effect: try elsewhere: it is not our job. As, having called attention to its enormous economic importance, and offered to aid its implementation financially, I am far too old and preoccupied to take the work in hand myself, I have finished my part in it by bequeathing to the Public Trustee the means of financing any qualified and responsible body, corporate or individual, which will take certain defined steps in its direction. These steps are, in brief, the designing of an alphabet capable of representing at least the 42 sounds of English speech, as listed by the late eminent phonetic expert Henry Sweet, without using more than one letter for each sound, and finally the transliteration and publication of a few English classics, including two of my own plays, in the new characters. Should this bequest have no effect within twenty years following my death, or be made superfluous, as it should be, by government action, my residuary estate will be administered in other public directions.

The matter is now disposed of as far as I am concerned.

GBS

Ayot Saint Lawrence,
Welwyn, Herts.
13/9/1944

The above is reproduced from one of Mr. Shaw's numerous printed postal cards.